

CAHPS® Health Plan Survey 4.0

Item Set for People With Mobility Impairments

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Introduction

Under the CAHPS II program, the CAHPS team has developed an item set that focuses on the experiences of people with mobility impairments (PWMI). The PWMI Item Set was developed to be used with either the commercial or the Medicaid version of the CAHPS Health Plan Survey.

Note Regarding Other CAHPS Surveys: The use of this item set with the CAHPS Clinician & Group Survey has not been tested. If you are interested in using the PWMI Item Set with any instrument other than the CAHPS Health Plan Survey, please contact the CAHPS Users Network at cahps1@ahrq.gov for technical assistance.

The PWMI Item Set allows sponsors to

- Assess the health care experiences of health plan members who have lower-limb mobility impairments, and
- Compare their experiences to those of similar people in other health plans and/or people without impairments in the same plan.

The items are listed in the **CAHPS Health Plan Survey 4.0 Supplemental Item Set for Adults**. That document includes instructions on where to place each item among the core items of the Health Plan Survey.

This document explains why this information is important, what is included in this set of items, and how sponsors and other organizations can use the survey results.

What Do We Mean by People With Mobility Impairments?

Over 12 million adults age 18-64 have activity limitations stemming from conditions including arthritis, heart or lung problems, unmanaged diabetes or obesity, spinal cord injuries, stroke, and muscular or neurological conditions such as cerebral palsy, Parkinson's disease, or multiple sclerosis. Many of these people simultaneously have vision, hearing, emotional, communication, or thought-processing co-impairments.

The PWMI Item Set uses specific “identifier” or “screener” items to locate this population within the larger population of survey respondents.

Why Is Information About this Population Important?

Many persons with mobility impairments have a “thinner margin of health” and need a more complex array of services than people without mobility impairments. They may also need modified referral procedures and accommodations by their health plan in order to obtain services such as accessible diagnostic equipment and clinics. By incorporating these supplemental items into the CAHPS Health Plan Survey, State agencies, other purchasers, and health plans can assess how well they are meeting those particular needs and where they could improve.

Also, a growing number of State agencies are starting to offer people with mobility impairments complex choices about their health plan options. In order to make well-informed decisions, these people need pertinent information about the experiences of people like them with these health plans.¹

Finally, the medical and financial consequences of delayed access accumulate rapidly for people with mobility impairments, driving up overall costs. With the help of these survey items, health plan managers, employers and Medicaid programs can identify opportunities for systems improvement that will benefit all consumers.

Contents of the Item Set for People With Mobility Impairments

The PWMI Item Set is comprised of 21 questions that cover 11 topics regarding experiences of care important to this population. Three of the items also serve as an “identifier” that can be used during the data analysis step to identify adults with mobility impairments.² One item simply confirms that the respondent visited the doctor’s office.

Topics Addressed by the Items

The item set covers the following topics:

- Use of mobility equipment (Identifier)
- Ability to walk and/or difficulty in walking a quarter mile (Identifier –2 items)
- Getting physical and occupational therapy
- Getting speech therapy
- Getting or replacing mobility equipment
- Getting mobility equipment repaired
- Getting weighed at the doctor’s office
- Being examined on the examination table
- Difficulty moving around the restroom
- Pain
- Fatigue

See the appendix for a list of the items for each topic.

These items are not placed in the survey together, but are dispersed in specific sections of the survey so that items that address common topics are grouped together. For example, questions in the PWMI item set that ask about experiences with a

¹ O’Day B, Palsbo SE, Dhont K, and Scheer J. Health Plan Selection Criteria by People with Impaired Mobility. *Med Care*. 2002 Sep;40(9):725-8.

² Stringfellow V, Latham N, Gallagher P, Lawthers A. Using screening questions to identify persons with mobility impairment. 2005 Proceedings, Survey Methods Section, American Statistical Association: Alexandria, VA.

personal doctor should be placed with core items that ask about the personal doctor. This approach reduces the cognitive burden on respondents.

Adding Other Items

Sponsors of the CAHPS Health Plan Survey always have the option of adding other CAHPS supplemental question as well as their own items to the questionnaire.

There are three topics pertinent to people with mobility impairments that the CAHPS Team purposely did not include in this item set: coordination of care, physical barriers, and personal care assistants. During the process of developing items on these topics, the CAHPS Team found that the items and concepts did not function as intended during testing. Before adding your own items to address these issues, we ask that you consider the reasons why we were not able to incorporate these important topics into the PWMI Item Set.

- *Coordination of care:* During testing, respondents had a difficult time interpreting these items as intended. In some cases, they did not understand the concept of “coordination of care” and were unsure of what the items were asking. In other cases, respondents understood the concept but evaluated care coordination by people outside their health plan (e.g., a friend or relative).
- *Physical barriers:* Items addressing physical barriers getting to and around doctors’ offices were tested. However, these items functioned inconsistently, and the term “physical barriers” presented a cognitive challenge to some respondents. The CAHPS Team will be working to refine these items by narrowing their focus to cover more specific topics such as inaccessibility due to lack of ramps, narrow doorways, etc.
- *Personal care assistants (PCAs):* Many people with impaired mobility depend on the quality of care and assistance provided by paid personal care assistants. However, the CAHPS Team found that several States pay family members or friends to provide PCA services. Also, the activities of “personal care assistance” are defined differently across States and health programs. This makes it impossible to define the topic consistently across a pool of respondents.

The CAHPS Team will continue working to develop items for these topics. Some items that are important to people with mobility impairments already exist as CAHPS core or supplemental items. An example would be items dealing with transportation, which are listed on page 33 of *CAHPS Health Plan Survey 4.0: Supplemental Items for the Adult Questionnaires* (Document No. 1157a). The PWMI Item Set does not include any items or repeat topics areas that are already addressed in the Health Plan Survey.

Gathering, Analyzing, and Reporting the Data

Gathering the Data

At this time, the CAHPS Team does not have a specific sampling strategy to recommend in order to oversample people who are more likely to identify themselves as having impaired mobility. Please follow the standard sampling protocol for the CAHPS Health Plan survey, which can be found in [Fielding the CAHPS Health Plan Survey – Medicaid Version](#) (PDF, 224KB; PDF Help).

Since many people with lower-limb mobility impairments also have impairments of the upper limb, the administrative mode you select (e.g., mail, telephone, mixed mode) may have an affect on responses. However, the CAHPS team has not yet investigated this issue for this population.

Analyzing the Data

You can use the CAHPS Analysis Program (also know as the CAHPS macro) to analyze the PWMI Item Set. However, composite measures for these items have not yet been developed. The CAHPS macro and instructions for using it can be downloaded from the [CAHPS Health Plan Survey and Reporting Kit 2007](#).

The CAHPS macro uses the identifier items to identify the population of people with mobility impairments. Survey sponsors can then compare composite- and item-level results for respondents with and without mobility impairments.

Reporting the Data

While there are no composite measures for the PWMI Item Set, there are two ways to report the information:

- Report the standard CAHPS composites (getting needed care, getting care quickly, etc.) for two separate groups:
 - The general population of respondents
 - The people with mobility impairments

This will allow you to identify the ways in which the experiences and perceptions of these two groups differ as well as the ways in which they are consistent.

- Report only the items for people with mobility impairments.

For help in reporting the survey results, refer to the guidelines in the Reporting Resources section of the CAHPS Web site (https://www.cahps.ahrq.gov/content/resources/report/RES_REPORT_Intro.asp). You may also contact the CAHPS User Network at cahps1@ahrq.gov or 1-800-492-9261 for further assistance.

Developers of the Item Set for People With Mobility Impairments

The Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality's CAHPS Consortium has been working with the following organizations to develop this item set:

- National Institute for Disability and Rehabilitation Research (NIDRR), U.S. Department of Education
- Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)
- George Mason University Center for the Study of Chronic Illness and Disability

The development process included input from a Technical Expert Panel, several rounds of cognitive testing, and field testing in Massachusetts and Wisconsin. To learn more about the development of these items, go to

https://www.cahps.ahrq.gov/content/products/PWMI/PROD_PWMI_Intro.asp.

Appendix: Questions in the PWMI Item Set

Topic	Item Number	Question Wording	Response Scale
Visit to doctor	IM1	In the last 12 months, did you visit your personal doctor for care?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes • No
Being examined on the examination table	IM2	When you visited your personal doctor's office in the last 12 months, how often were you examined on the examination table?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Never • Sometimes • Usually • Always
Getting weighed at the doctor's office	IM3	When you visited your personal doctor's office in the last 12 months, how often did someone weigh you?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Never • Sometimes • Usually • Always
Difficulty moving around the restroom	IM4	When you visited your personal doctor's office in the last 12 months, did you try to use the restroom?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes • No
	IM5	In the last 12 months, how often was it easy to move around the restroom at your personal doctor's office?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Never • Sometimes • Usually • Always
Pain	IM6	In the last 12 months, did you and your personal doctor talk about pain?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes • No
	IM7	In the last 12 months, how often did pain limit your ability to do the things you needed to do?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Never • Sometimes • Usually • Always
	IM8	In the last 12 months, do you think that your personal doctor understood the impact that pain has on your life?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes • No
Fatigue	IM9	In the last 12 months, how often did fatigue limit your ability to do the things you needed to do?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Never • Sometimes • Usually • Always
	IM10	In the last 12 months, do you think that your personal doctor understood the impact that fatigue has on your life?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes • No
Getting physical and occupational therapy	IM11	In the last 12 months, did you need physical or occupational therapy?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes • No
	IM12	In the last 12 months, how often was it easy to get this kind of therapy through your health plan?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Never • Sometimes • Usually • Always

Topic	Item Number	Question Wording	Response Scale
Getting speech therapy	IM13	In the last 12 months, did you need speech therapy?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes • No
	IM14	In the last 12 months, how often was it easy to get speech therapy through your health plan?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Never • Sometimes • Usually • Always
Using mobility equipment (Identifier)	IM15	Mobility equipment includes things like a wheelchair, scooter, walker or cane. In the last 12 months, have you used any mobility equipment to move around your home or community?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes • No
Getting mobility equipment repaired	IM16	In the last 12 months, did you try to get your mobility equipment repaired through your health plan?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes • No
	IM17	In the last 12 months, how often was it easy to get your mobility equipment repaired through your health plan?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Never • Sometimes • Usually • Always
Getting or replacing mobility equipment	IM18	In the last 12 months, did you try to get or replace any mobility equipment through your health plan?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes • No
	IM19	In the last 12 months, how often was it easy to get or replace the mobility equipment that you needed through your health plan?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Never • Sometimes • Usually • Always
Ability to walk and/or difficulty in walking a quarter mile (Identifiers)	IM20	A quarter mile is about 5 city blocks or 0.4 kilometers. In the last 12 months, were you able to walk that far?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes • No
	IM21	In the last 12 months, did you have difficulty or need assistance to walk that far?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes • No